



*JONATHAN WILD,*

THE  
L I F E  
O F  
JONATHAN WILD,  
FROM HIS  
BIRTH to his DEATH.

CONTAINING

His Rise and Progress in ROGUERY ; his first Acquaintance with THIEVES ; by what Arts he made himself their HEAD, or GOVERNOR ; his Discipline over them ; his Policy and great Cunning in governing them ; and the several Classes of THIEVES under his Command.

In which all his INTRIGUES, PLOTS and ARTIFICES are accounted for, and laid open.

To which is added,

A true COPY of a PAPER design'd to be deliver'd by him at the Place of Execution, to the Reverend Mr. *Edwards*.

*Intermix'd with Variety of diverting STORIES.*

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*The Second EDITION.*

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By *H. D.* late Clerk to Justice —

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L O N D O N :

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# THE PREFACE.



THE Account which the Reader will here find, of the most extraordinary ROGUE that ever yet Suffer'd in *England*, was pick'd up, for the most Part at several Times, from his own Relations and Stories of himself; which are the best Authorities that can be produced for Things which, according to the Iniquity and Nature of them, were transacted with such extreme Caution.

And it is certain, that the greatest Part of his dark Proceedings wou'd still have continu'd a Secret to the World, had it not been, that in his gay Hours, when his Heart was open, he took Pleasure in recounting his past Rogueries, and, with a great deal of Humour, bragg'd of his biting the World; often hinting, not without Vanity, at the poor Understanding of the greatest Part of Mankind, and his own superior Cunning.

And indeed, when we consider that it is not a Man's Grandeur, or high Station in the World, but the strange Adventures of his Life, and his Art and Conduct in the Management of Things, which gives us a Curiosity of looking into his History--- I say, when this is granted, we need make no Apology for collecting these Materials, and offering them to the Publick--- for here they will meet with a System of Politicks unknown to *Machiavel*; they will see deeper  
Strata-



Stratagems and Plots form'd by a Fellow without Learning or Education, than are to be met with in the Conduct of the greatest Statesman, who have been at the Heads of Governments.

And indeed, when Things are rightly compared, it will be found that he had a more difficult Game to play ; for he was to blind the Eyes of the World, to find out Tricks to evade the Penalties of the Law ; and on the other Side, to govern a Body of People who were Enemies to all Government ; and to bring those under Obedience to him, who, at the Hazard of their Lives, acted in Disobedience to the Laws of the Land---This was steering betwixt *Scylla* and *Charybdis* ; and if he had not been a very skilful Pilot, he must long since have split upon a Rock, either on one Side or the other.

To conclude : We have not taken so much Pains to multiply a Number  
of

of Stories, which wou'd have swell'd the Bulk of these Sheets, and increas'd the Price, and perhaps tired the Reader ; we have only endeavour'd to trace him thro' his several Steps and Gradations, to account for the Policy and Cunning of his Management, and relating only such Facts as have not yet been made publick concerning him.

*P. S.* As to the Paper he left behind him, and which we have annex'd to this Edition, it was given me by a Person, who being of his Acquaintance, was admitted frequently to his Company after his Conviction, and which he assures me he had from his own Hands ; the Reverend Gentleman there mentioned, whom I know nothing of, can best tell whether he had such a Design of communicating himself to the Publick in that manner, and there I leave it.



THE  
L I F E  
O F  
JONATHAN WILD,

From his BIRTH to his DEATH.



JONATHAN WILD was born of very honest Parents in the Town of *Wolverhampton* in the County of *Stafford*. His Father was not rich; however, he provided handsomely for his Family while he lived, by his Trade, which was that of a Carpenter: But he dying, and  
B leaving



leaving four or five small Children for the Widow to bring up and subsist, 'tis no wonder if their Education was no better taken Care of. As for *Jonathan*, he shew'd early Signs of a forward Genius, and, whilst a Boy, would commit a thousand little Rogueries among those of the same, or a superior Class, in which he discovered a ready Wit, and a Cunning much above his Years, tho' these Actions did not extend to robbing, or any such Crime; but I mean little collusive Tricks, which serv'd to impose upon his own Companions, who had a less Faculty of discerning than *Jonathan* had.

At the usual Age, when young *Jonathan* had been instructed to a moderate Degree of Learning, such as Writing and Accounts, he was put 'Prentice to a Buckle-maker, whom he serv'd seven Years honestly enough; when that Time was expired, he carry'd on a little peddling Business himself in the same Way; but *Jonathan* wanted Application, which is generally observ'd to be the Fault of Men of brisk Parts: Work and he were too much at Variance for him to thrive by his Trade; he seem'd to follow it only at a Distance, often playing the Loose, wandering from one Ale-house to another, with the very worst, tho' the merriest Company in the Place; and was particularly fond of the strolling Actors that now and then frequented that Country.

After

After this Manner *Jonathan* liv'd three or four Years, leading a Life of Pleasure, disturb'd with nothing, unless it was now and then at the Noise of a Drum, which he had as great Antipathy to as some Folks to Cheese or a Cat. This was in the Heighth of the late War between *France* and the Confederates, when the Officers went down into the several Counties for Recruits for *Flanders*, for which Kind of Service Mr. *Wild* had perhaps more Aversion than for any other Thing in Life ; this was not for want of Courage, as we shall prove in the Course of his History ; but he thought a Man of Stratagem might push his Fortune some better Way than by standing to be shot at, and therefore 'twas necessary that he should employ the utmost Cunning to avoid it, which however *Jonathan* could never have done, but by a Trick which he was more beholden to Nature for than Art ; this was a Knack of dislocating his Hip-bone, which he could do without Pain, and thereby render himself a Cripple, and repose it in its Place again without Trouble, whenever he pleas'd ; this was particularly useful to him, and which he constantly perform'd whenever his unlucky Stars brought him within Sight of a red Coat, which he us'd to pass by in so decrepid and deform'd a Posture as never fail'd to move Pity in the Beholders towards so miserable an Object ; and he was no sooner out of Sight of 'em,

but he walk'd as upright and as firm as any Man.

In the Course of *Jonathan's* Trading, he visited some Market-Towns to put off his Wares, as other Dealers did, at which Time he us'd to hire a Horse of his Neighbour's, (for *Jonathan's* Stock would not amount to one of his own ;) and at a certain Time when Trade grew bad on his Hands, he sells his whole Cargoe for what he could get, and rides up the Horse to *London*, instead of returning home to *Wolverhampton*; and the Owner heard nothing of his Beast, till 'twas sold, and all the Money spent.

While *Jonathan* was spending, in Gaiety and Pleasure, the little Fortune he had acquir'd by the Sale of his own Stock, and his Neighbour's Horse, he got acquainted with several Persons of both Sexes, who were People of Merit, in their Way; by whose Interest, and the Vivacity of his own Parts, he was recommended to an Employment of Trust, in which he acquitted himself very handsomely, considering the Corruption of the Times; but after a while, *Jonathan* finding it rather a Post of Honour than Profit, resign'd, and went down into his own Country again. The Employment I mean, is that of a Bailiff's Follower; the Qualifications of which are Vigilance, Sagacity, Patience, Quick-sightedness, *cum multis aliis*, which our *Jonathan* had frequent Opportunities of exercising.

One



One of the first Visitors *Jonathan* had upon his Return to *Wolverhampton*, was Mr. —, who lent him his Horse; to whom he open'd his Case, letting him know that he was not one Farthing the richer by living at *London*, that he had spent every Groat, and if he threw him into Prison, he would lose his Money, but that if he would favour him so as to give him Time, he would pay for his Horse at a Shilling in the Pound *per* Month, till the whole was paid; and he should apply himself with Assiduity to his own Business, to enable him to make good these Conditions; which the Creditor considering, came into, and so the Agreement was made.

Mr. *Wild*, pursuant to the above Terms, made two Payments at the Time they became due, but neglecting the third for a Fortnight or three Weeks, Mr. — gave *Jonathan* a gentle Dun, telling him at what time the Month was up, and so forth, but was very much surpriz'd to find that Mr. *Wild* was so far from making any Excuse for his Omission, that he told him plainly he should pay him no more Money, and wonder'd at his Assurance of making Demands on him. *Why*, says the Creditor, *did not you run away with my Horse, sell him at London, and put the Money in your own Pocket? I did so*, answered *Jonathan*, *but that affair was settled by an Agreement between*

*tween us that I should pay you so much Money by Monthly Payments, in Consideration thereof; therefore that Cause is at an End. Very well, reply'd the Creditor, why don't you pay me according to that Contract then? No, quoth Jonathan, that Contract is obsolete and of none effect. How so? says the Creditor. Why you'll allow, says Jonathan, that Articles of Agreement, or Contracts, not fulfill'd, are broken, and Articles once broken, cannot subsist afterwards: Now our Articles are broken, continued he, for I have made but two Payments, when there are three due long ago, therefore I owe you nothing.*

I mention this Story to shew that Jonathan had a Genius for the Study of the Law; and had not his Practice taken another Turn at first, I don't know whether, better or worse, as it is practis'd of late, he might have been as eminent, and made as great a Figure as some of his Countrymen.

It was not long after this, that Jonathan found the making of Buckles too mechanick an Employment for him; his Soul was too great to be confin'd to such servile Work; and what was worse, he easily perceiv'd he had Occasion for more Money than his Hands could procure him in that narrow Way of Business; therefore he spurn'd at the Trade, and resolv'd, some how or other, to transfer the Labour from his Hands to his Head, as being the most likely Means of getting a Livelihood fit for a Gentleman. Big

Big with Hopes, he set out for *London* once more; but as if he threw himself entirely upon Fortune, and resolved to court her Favours, he begun his Journey on foot, and with no more than nine Pence in his Pocket; and the first Day he was so lucky as to meet with the Goddess in the same shape the Poets describe her, *viz.* That of a Woman, travelling on the Road. The Lady was on Horseback, but however she was so good-natur'd as to let *Jonathan* keep Pace with her for three or four Miles, till by a little Conversation they grew intimate, and acquainted with each other's Circumstances: She told *Jonathan* she was an itinerant Doctress and cur'd People of all Distempers; that she had been riding about the Country for the Good of the Publick, and was then going to *Gloucester*; whereupon *Jonathan* being in a merry Humour ask'd her Opinion concerning his Leg and Thigh, which he presently put out in the manner before mentioned; the Gentlewoman alighted from her Horse, and handling *Jonathan's* Parts, she found his Hip-bone was out of its Socket, a great Exuberance on the back Part thereof, and his Knee and Foot turn'd almost behind him.

She was amazed to see this sudden Alteration, without being sensible of the Cause, and was very much troubled to know what she should do with the poor Fellow in that Condition; but *Jonathan* presently put her  
out



out of Pain, desired her to mount her Horse and he would accompany her into Town. He thereupon replaces the Joint, and walks along before her with great Briskness and Agility. When she was thoroughly inform'd of the Trick, she intimated how useful this Deceit might be made to them both, if he would leave it to her Management; and all the Trouble he should be at, was to lie a Bed for a Fortnight, and eat and drink whatever he had a mind to. Upon which she let him into a Secret, that she knew no more of Physick or Surgery than her Horse, and only pretended to it for a Livelihood.

It may be imagin'd, that *Jonathan* was not difficult to be wrought on to such good Purposes, for he was never an Enemy to Eating and drinking in his whole Life; accordingly the Plan was laid, and *Jonathan* hopp'd into Town in the Evening in the Circumstances of a poor decriped Beggar-man.

The Doctress set up at the best Inn in *Gloucester*, ask'd for a Room, and call'd the Landlord, telling him, she found a poor miserable Object upon the Road, that ask'd Alms of her, which she presently relieved, seeing him in a Condition that render'd him useles to the World, and burthensome to himself, adding that since he might be able, if his Lameness could be cured, to get an honest Livlyhood by his Labour, 'twas a Thousand Pities he should not be taken Care of.

The

The Landlord could say nothing to that, 'twas the Parish's Business where he was born, he said, who should take Care of him? says she, if you have any eminent Surgeon in Town, a Man of Honour and Probity, that will undertake his Cure, I will be at the Expence of it my self, and give him a suitable Reward. The Landlord Commended her Ladyship's Charity, and *Jonathan* pray'd aloud for his Benefactress.

On Mr. B-----, a Surgeon, was sent for, to whom Madam declared her self in like manner; and the Surgeon took a Survey before all the House of the Part affected: He saw the Nature of his Lameness, and therefore only ask'd *Jonathan* how long ago this Misfortune happen'd to him? He answered, in a whining Tone, *About eight Years*; and thereupon relates a plausible Story of his falling off a Tree in a Country Village, where no help was to be met with, and his Mother being a poor Woman had not wherewithall to pay a Doctor, and the like; but pretended to be very much cast down, when the Surgeon, addressing himself to the Gentlewoman, said, *Madam, it would be no less than a Robbery to take your Money, for there's no possibility of serving him, the Bone having been so long misplac'd has contracted a new Situation, and the Head of the Bone has formed a new Socket so formidable, that 'twould be unnatural now to remove it thence,*

*so that we must let it rest as it is.* This did not seem to satisfy the Gentlewoman, she was sure, she said, *the Limb might be reduc'd to its proper Place, with Care taken, if he would apply Fomentations, and other topical Medicines to the Part, for the Relaxation of the Ligaments, &c. in Preparation for the Reduction.* This was disputed some Time with Warmth, between the Male and the Female Surgeon, till it ended, as often Arguments do, in a Wager of fifty Guineas; and the Lady her self was to take the Matter into her own Hands.

Whereupon the Patient was blooded, and then put into a warm Bed: Stupes were made of a thousand Herbs, and the Fomentation apply'd, or pretended so to be, several times a Day. Mr. B—— visited him once in twenty four Hours; and the Gentlewoman continued with him all the while for ten Days together; in which time honest *Jonathan* acted his Part so well that he roar'd himself hoarse, for the Pain he underwent (as it was thought) in this Extraordinary Operation. At length, one Morning, as Mr. B—— the Surgeon, our Quack Doctors, and three or four of the Town (for the Affair had made some Noise) were coming up Stairs, they heard the Patient, instead of groaning and making other dismal Cries, as he us'd to do, singing whistling, and what not; so they all burst into his Chamber, and presently ask'd



ask'd the Occasion of his Mirth; *Jonathan* told them he never knew so much Pleasure in all his Life-time, for now he said he was as free from Pain as ever a one in the Room.

The sly Doctress desir'd to be inform'd how and at what time the Pain left him? He answer'd, that *about three a Clock that Morning* (not having slept for four Nights before) *he fell into a Dose, and dream'd that two Angels lifted him out of Bed, and carried him thro' several Regions, of which he could give no Account, and set him down upon a fine Bank of Flowers, on the Side of a Rivulet; on the other Side of which were beautiful Walks, pleasant Groves, and curious Water-works, and in the Center of all, a Pavillion of Ivory, of extraordinary Workmanship, particularly the Sculpture; the Roof was adorn'd with Birds of all kinds, inlaid; and on the Inside a Throne of pure Gold, where sat his kind and good Benefactress. At the Sight of her, continued Jonathan, I rose up in Haste, thinking to swim the Rivulet, when a Noise like Thunder awaken'd me, and I found my self in this Bed, in perfect Health and Ease. The cunning Gentlewoman cry'd out, at that Instant went the Bone into its Place. With that they turned down the Bed-cloaths, and found Jonathan a whole Man, to the great Surprize of all the Company.*

This extraordinary Cure was look'd upon as a kind of Miracle: Mr. B—— believ'd it as such, paid the Money, (*viz.* fifty Guineas) and clear'd the Case up to every Body from any Imputation of Deceit. *Jonathan* in two or three Days came Abroad, but limp'd a little; and Madam Doctress gave publick Notice that she would stay a Week in that Town, for the sake of the diseased Poor of the Country, for whom she would make up some Papers of Powders that should cure them of all Disorders, and make it the healthiest Part in the whole Kingdom, for which she would take nothing of them but what the Medecines cost her out of her Pocket, *according to the Cant of all Quacks.*

The News run, like that of a great Victory gain'd over the *French* and *Spaniards*, and People of all Conditions, Age and Sexes, came into *Gloucester*, so that *Jonathan* could not pound Brick-dust fast enough for Sale; the Price of a small Paper of which, with a Mixture of Brimstone and —, came but to six Pence.

By this Stratagem the Woman's Fame was so rais'd, that when *Jonathan* and she computed their Gains, they found after all Charges were deducted, that they were much about 100 *l.* in Pocket, with which they set out early in the Morning, and arriv'd at *London* safely in three Days following. Here *Jonathan* liv'd a merry Life as long as the Money laste d

lasted, and being seduced by the Pleasures of the Town, had no Thought of getting more till urg'd thereto by Necessity. But now an unlucky Accident happen'd, which seem'd to give an ill turn to his Affairs, for his Lady *Doctress* took it into her Head to fall out with him; whether it be that she was jealous of his having some new Amour, (for *Jonathan* was always a great Man amongst the Ladies) or whether she could not bear his Extravagance, is a piece of History we cannot clear up; but let it be which it will, there arose so furious a Quarrel betwixt them, that *Jonathan* was laid aside and oblig'd to shift for himself. He was after this Footman to one Mr. *Daniel* a Barrister of Law, in whose Service he spent some Time; in which nothing remarkable happening, we pass over in Silence. A little Time after he was arrested in an Action of Debt; and he being destitute both of Credit and Friends, cou'd meet with no Body who would venture to bail him, so that he was thrown into the *Compter*, where he lay a considerable Time.

Here *Jonathan* laid the Foundation of all his future Greatness; for it must be observ'd, that the *Compter* is the Place where common Thieves and Pickpockets taken in the City, are first carried as soon as they are apprehended: *Jonathan* took care to cultivate an Acquaintance and Intimacy with them all, and as they are an enterprizing  
Body



Body of Men, there seem'd to a kind of Sympathy betwixt their Natures and that of *Jonathan*, so that they soon crept into one another's Secrets; he became acquainted with all their Tricks and Stratagems, and when the Iron Hand of Justice had laid hold of them, and they were entangled in Difficulties, he often put such Quirks and Evasions in their Heads, and gave them such Advice, as sometimes prov'd of great Advantage to them, so that he became a kind of Oracle amongst the Thieves.

After he had laid a considerable Time in the *Compter*, he was assisted by a Friendly Gentleman in *Little-Britain*, who getting a small Contribution among his Neighbours, procur'd *Jonathan's* Liberty with it.

He had now a numerous Acquaintance, with whom he constantly associated, these were the Thieves (as has been before observed; ) there was no Enterprize they went upon, whether in Town or Country, but they acquainted *Jonathan* with the Particulars of their Success, what Booty they got, and what Hazzards they run, so communicative are these Gentlemen to those who keep them Company; yet, at the Beginning, he had so much the Fear of the Gallows before his Eyes, that they cou'd never prevail with him to go with them upon any Adventure, and share in the executive Part.

At

At first, *Jonathan* drove but a poor pedling Trade, only helping People to Writings which the Thieves cou'd make no Profit of, and which cou'd be of no Use but to the Owners, and in this he at first acted with such extream Caution, for fear of coming within the Penalty of the Laws, that after he had bargain'd with the People, and they were come by his Appointment to pay the Money, and receive the Writings, he led them into a Room contriv'd for that Purpose; where pushing back a small Pannel of the Wainscot, a Hand us'd to appear with the Writings in it, and the Parties were to take them out of that Hand, and to put the Money into it, without their seeing the Body which belonged to it; so that they cou'd not say he had ever taken any of their Money, or receiv'd the stolen Goods; yet the Success and Encouragement he afterwards met with, made him more careless to his great Sorrow.

The first Thing that gave him any Fame, was a Dispute he had with *Cornelius a Tilburgh*, a noted Quack Doctor, who being robb'd of some Goods, and hearing of *Jonathan Wild*, apply'd to him for the Recovery of them; but after they had treated some Time they cou'd not agree about the Price; upon the whole, *Tilburgh* was vex'd he cou'd not have his Goods again, and thinking *Jonathan* had them, he arrests him in an Action

Action of Trover; *Jonathan* gave bail to the Action, and so a Suit of Law was commenced, which was so well defended on *Jonathan's* side, that the Doctor was nonsuited, and Costs were given to *Jonathan*.

This gave him a great Reputation, among his good Friends the Thieves, who thought *Jonathan* the best Factor or Agent they cou'd employ, so that his Business so increas'd, that 'tis thought he got two or three hundred Pounds a Year by Commission.

But it is no wonder he should thus by degrees increase in Business and in Fame, for no Man grows great at once. Having now engross'd the whole Traffick of stolen Goods to himself, he became as useful to the Thieves as they were to him; for now by his Credit they had a safe way of making Money of every Thing that fell into their Hands, whereas before they run as great Hazards, of being discover'd and brought to Justice when they went about to dispose of their Goods, as they did in stealing them.

But as the Thieves first set him up only as their Factor, he by degrees made himself their Master and their Tyrant; he divided the City and Suburbs into Wards or Divisions, and appointed the Persons who were to attend each Ward, and kept them strictly to their Duty; he also called them to a very exact Account, and made them produce what they had got, and tho' it were Money he wou'd



wou'd have his Dividend; and it was no less than Death to *sink* upon him, as he term'd it; for there was scarce any Thing stole which was worth having again but he heard of it, and knew who the Person must be that took it, as well as those who lost it. This is plain by what follows:

Some time since, the Dutchess of *Tyrconnel* being at Mass, at the Chapel of his Excellency Count *Staremborg* in the *Pall-Mall*; her Grace in the Height of her Devotion had her Gold Watch stolen from her Side, which was enter'd next Day in Mr. *Wild's* Office, who assur'd her Grace that the Business was perform'd by a regular Hand, and therefore he doubted not the Recovery of it. *Fox*, alias *Vaux*, a dextrous Fellow, having his Station about *Westminster-hall*, the Court of Requests, and at the Cathedral and Parochial Churches, *Wild* was assur'd must be the Man, tho' he intending to bite *Jonathan* of his share, denied it obstinately at first; but Mr. *Wild* using Menaces, and threat'ning, if he persisted, to send him to his triangular Home, he confess'd the Bill, and *paid back* (as the Thieves term it) the Watch to the Dutchess, for twenty five Guineas.

However fond *Jonathan* appear'd to be of getting Money, he shew'd a Generosity to his Friends, not common with People who practise the Law, of which I could give numberless Instances: Particularly, an Acquaintance of

his who lived in the *Mint*, having lost a Gold Watch (for there were Gold Watches there sometimes) he paid back the Watch without one farthing Expence; he return'd me a Pocket Book with some Notes of Value, which I advertis'd in one of the Papers, gratis, but gave me this Caution *to keep better Company*: And one Mr. *H—ll*, then a Justice of the Peace, told me that once going to a Country Fair, he met *Jonathan* upon the Road, who gave him a Watch-word, by using which, he said, if he met any of the *Prigs* that were out in these Hundreds, he would pass safe. Mr. *Giles Taylor*, a tall Attorney, losing his Snuff Box, he could not prevail with *Jonathan* to trouble himself about such trivial Things as he called it, but Mr. *Taylor* telling him he valued the Box, and withal reminded him that he us'd to come with Briefs to his Master Counsellor *Daniel*, whom he had the Honour to serve in the Quality of a Footman: O Sir, says *Wild*, *I cry your Mercy, you have given me many a Six-pence, call in a Day or two and you shall have your Box again*; which was accordingly left for him at a Tavern in the *Old-Bailey* without a Fee.

The Wife of Mr. *Chiselden*, a famous Surgeon, having been robb'd of a Diamond Buckle at the *Bath*; Mr. *Chiselden*, together with a creditable Shop-keeper, near the *Old-Bailey*, waited on Mr. *Wild* for his Advice;  
*Wild*

*Wild* being very drunk, receiv'd him with a great deal of Rudeness not usual with him, but he signified the Cause of his Disgust to him; for he told the Surgeon that he had dissected several honest Fellows that were his Friends and Acquaintance, and that he should be d—d before he should have his Buckle again, which he assured him was dissected, and divided amongst the jolly Fellows, who had fairly ventured their Lives for it, and so dismissed Mr. *Chiselden*.

I mention these Instances, to shew that *Jonathan's* Practice was fairer than some other Peoples, and that he was capable of more honourable and friendly Actions, than those that made so great a Noise of *their Charity, their Generosity, &c.* It is certain, as the elegant Author of the *Weekly Journal* observes, *Jonathan* hated these Pretenders to his Art, and call'd them the Quacks of the Profession which every Science was pester'd with.

One time an accident happen'd to a Gentlewoman at *Hackney*, who us'd to let Lodgings: A Lady, who came attended by a Footman and a Maid, took a Lodging in her House; the first Day they had Possession of it, they broke open a Scrutore belonging to the Gentlewoman of the House, which was full of Chince and Muslin, and very dexterously carried off the whole Cargoe; it was a great Loss to the poor Woman, who



lamenting with her Neighbours, they advis'd her to go to *Jonathan Wild*, and offer a Sum of Money to recover it; she went accordingly, and when she gave him an Account where she lived, and what she had lost, he call'd to his Book-keeper to search the Books, to know if any of their People had been lately out to take the Air at *Hackney*: The Fellow having examin'd, answered immediately that *Wapping Moll* had been there, and that *Tawny Bess* was her Maid, and *Harry Smart* her Footman; *Jonathan* appear'd in a Passion, and curs'd them sufficiently, but appointed the Gentlewoman to come again in a little Time, when he procur'd the Things upon her paying the Money agreed for.

Thus he made them all pay Contribution, whether they made Use of him in disposing of the Things or no: And when the late Act was made, which gives a Pardon to one Felon for convicting another, he became absolute over them all; for if any of them disoblig'd him, or, as he call'd it, *rebel'd*, he took them up, and thereby got the Reward appointed by Act of Parliament for taking Highwaymen: On the contrary, when any of his own People were taken, which he had a Mind to save, then he endeavour'd to take some other; then his own Man by claiming the Benefit of the Act became an Evidence. When ever any interloping Traders

dérs started up in the Business, that is, People who set up for themselves without paying him any Contribution, or Homage, or holding any Correspondence with him, he did all he cou'd to take them; and if such were otherwise taken up upon Suspicion, or upon any Information, and Evidence was wanting to convict them, nothing was more common than for him to take up one of his own Fellows, whose Life was always in his Power, and make him swear himself into some of the Robberies, of which the others were suspected, whereby their Evidence might obtain some Credit with a Jury, and *Jonathan* was intitled to the Reward if he was the Person who took them.

And thus by taking some of his own Gang now and then, because they had disoblig'd him, and apprehending others because they were not of his Gang, and hanging them in the manner before described, he was reckoned a very useful Man, and was often call'd upon by the Court to look at the Prisoners, and give them Characters; which seem'd to have great Weight at that time. And sometimes, by ingenious Quirks, or by managing the Juries or Evidences, he has brought off some of his Favourites, who had been taken in the very Facts for which they were committed; as he did once by two Fellows, who having committed a Robbery on the Highway, and several Persons well mount-  
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ed and arm'd happening to come by immediately, they were pursued and taken, with the Gentlemens Watches and Rings about them; and being forthwith carried before a Justice of Peace, were committed to *Newgate*; within a Day or two of the Sessions, *Jonathan*, whose Wit seldom fail'd him at a Pinch, enquiring the Names of the Prosecutors, went to them, and asking them if they had not been robb'd by such and such Fellows, now in *Newgate*? The Gentlemen answered they had. *Jonathan* pretending a great Spleen to those Fellows, who he said were the greatest Rogues in the whole World, and that he would have hang'd them long ago if he could have found them; and therefore begg'd of the Gentlemen that he might assist them in managing the Prosecution, and he wou'd engage the Rascals shou'd not escape: The Gentlemen, very willing to have Part of the Trouble taken off their Hands, accepted his Offer, knowing Mr. *Wild* to be a Person very well skill'd in those Affairs. Accordingly, they appointed to meet at a Tavern in the *Old-Baily*, on the Morning which was appointed for the Trial of these Highwaymen: When they met, *Jonathan* told them there was a great Croud in the Court, and that they had better stay there till the Trial shou'd begin; which he said wou'd not be till about Three a Clock in the Afternoon. In the mean time a Dinner was bespoke, to be ready



dy at One; and *Jonathan* sent a Man to wait in the Court, with orders to call them when the Trial came on. *Jonathan* made such good Use of his Time, that whether by putting something into the Liquor, or by fair Drinking, is not known; but it is certain he made the Gentlemen very drunk, who pass'd away the Time till Evening without thinking of the Matter; at which Time one of them wondring that their Messenger had not call'd them, they sent another to the Court, to know what was doing there; when they found the Court was broke up, and the two Highwaymen were discharg'd, there having no Evidence appear'd against them.

In an Affair like this, *Jonathan* did not come off quite so well, tho' the Business was managed with equal Success; the Story is this, One *Arnold Powell*, a notorious Housebreaker, was committed to *Newgate*, and a Prosecution carrying on against him by one Mr. *Eastwick*, a Glass-grinder, near *Bridewell*. *Jonathan* pays his Respects to the Prosecutor, and acquaints him how ready he should be to bring such a Villain to Justice, and if he would leave the Matter to his handling, he should certainly *send him to sleep with the Fathers*, for that was his Expression. Accordingly Mr. *Eastwick* commits the Management of the Suit to him, and chose to be directed by him; who, he was satisfied, had

had a better Understanding in those Affairs than himself.

Before the Sessions, *Jonathan*, tho' retain'd on the other Side of the Cause; visits Mr. *Powell*, tells him of the dangerous Circumstances he was in, and at the same Time enquires into the Value of his personal Estate; the Thief apprehended his meaning, and made him sensible that forty Pounds should not part them, (for it seems this Fellow never came into *Jonathan's* Books) whereupon the Bargain was struck, the Money paid down, and Mr. *Wild* left him with this Blessing, *Live and prosper.*

When the Sessions came on, a Bill was found for Felony and Burglary against Mr. *Powell*, for breaking open, and robbing the House of the said Mr. *Eastwick*; so far Mr. *Eastwick* saw Matters were carried fair: When this was done, Mr. *Wild* desir'd the Prosecutor and his Witnesses to go to his House in the *Old-Bayley*, that they might not wait about in the *Sessions-house-Yard*, till the Tryal came on, which they readily agreed to; from thence *Jonathan* carried them to an Alehouse at the Upper-end of the Street, quite out of the hearing of the Court, and there plies them with Liquors by one of his Agents; in the mean Time he gets *Powell* set to the Bar, and the Witnesses call'd over and over, time after time, but no Body appearing, nor any Account to be given why they did not, the Prisoner was acquitted. 3 When

When Mr. *Eastwick* found how the Game had been play'd, he complains to the Recorder of the Abuse, who was very ready to do Mr. *Wild* all the Justice in the World, and therefore commits him to *Newgate*, in order to be try'd at the ensuing Sessions for the Offence; and *Powell*, tho' acquitted then for want of Evidence, was detain'd in Custody, and convicted the next Sessions, perhaps for another Fact, and executed; but honest *Jonathan* alighted upon his Legs like an expert Tumbler, and came off unhurt.

However, this was by discerning Men look'd upon to be a kind of a Slur upon *Jonathan's* Character; he found himself, that after this he had not that Credit with the Court upon the Tryal of any Criminal, as he us'd to have; and he took as odd a way to retrieve it as ever was thought of; for in order to insinuate himself into the good Graces of the *R—r*, he sets one of his Gang to steal the Velvet Seats out of his Coach, and then waited upon him with a Tender of his Service, to recover them without any Expence to his Honour; but Sir *W—m* despis'd his Offer, and generously chose rather to sit down with the Loss, than to recover them, by giving Countenance to such scandalous Practices.

By all the before-mentioned Tricks and Artifices, *Jonathan* pass'd for a Man of so much Understanding and Interest, that the Thieves  
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began to think he could hang or save whom he pleas'd ; so that all Malefactors, whether of his own Gang or not, after they were taken, used to flatter themselves that if they cou'd raise any Money for *Jonathan*, he wou'd bring them off ; and even after they were condemned, they were of Opinion that his extraordinary Interest might procure them a Reprieve, or have the Sentence chang'd to Transportation.

It is certain that it was one of his Arts to make them believe so ; and he used particularly to affect an extraordinary Intimacy with certain Justices of Peace ; and as it is said he sometimes drank with those Gentlemen at Taverns, he used to leave word at Home, that if any Body should enquire for him, he was gone to such a Tavern, to meet Justice such-a-one. The Use he made of insinuating this Notion into their Heads was, that if any Information should be given to these Justices, against any of his Friends, he should have timely Notice of it, from them or their Clerks, so that the Party might get out of the way ; which was a material Thing towards keeping his People always depending upon him.

The Reader will imagine, by what has been here related, that *Jonathan* must be a Person of no uncommon Parts : — To govern a Commonwealth already fix'd and establish'd, is no more than what may be done  
by

by any common Capacity ; but to form and establish a Body of such lawless People into what we may call a Form of Government ; to erect a Commonwealth like that of the Bees, in which there shou'd be no Drone, in which every Member was oblig'd to go forth and labour, and to bring an Offering to him their King, of Part of the Product of their Cunning and Industry ; to be able so many Years to evade the Punishments appointed by the Laws of all Nations, for such Persons as make no Difference betwixt *Meum* and *Tuum* ; and to live not only in a Toleration, but even in a kind of Credit, amongst the People he was robbing every Day, and to escape the Plots and Conspiracies of his own treacherous Subjects—I say, to be able to manage all this, must proceed from an admirable Wit and Cunning, and thorough Observation of the Humours and weak Sides of Men.

But to return to our Subject, we have taken Notice in what manner *Jonathan's* Revenues were rais'd and encreas'd ; but as his Subjects were so frequently taken off by untimely Ends, his Royalty wou'd by degrees have declin'd and sunk at last to little or nothing, if he had not by admirable Foresight and Care provided future Thieves both for himself and the Gallows.

The *Mint* in *Southwark* was the Country where *Jonathan* usually went to raise Recruits when his Army began to grow thin  
and

and weak; there I say he constantly beat up for Voluntiers, and most of his best Men came from thence.

He knew it was the Place where Tradesmen who had met with Misfortunes first retir'd to, that it was the constant Retreat of all those whom Idleness, or Extravagance had render'd obnoxious to the Law—He knew also that People under those Circumstances commonly brought a little Money with them at their first going over, which being soon spent, by reason of their being out of Business to get more, they must of Consequence be reduc'd to extream Necessity, till which Time he did not judge them rightly qualified for his Service.

As I was let into this Secret of his Proceedings by a Story from his own Mouth, I shall relate the Method and Way he went to work with the Gentlemen *Minters*.

*First*, He made himself acquainted with all the People who kept publick Houses, whether Taverns, Ale-houses, or the Venders of the royal Liquor commonly call'd *Gin*; from these he learn'd from Time to Time what People were newly come over, and if he lik'd the Description of their Persons, and the Account of their Circumstances, he took some Opportunity of getting into Company with them; and *Jonathan*, being facetious as well as frank and open in Conversation, made himself very agreeable to those



those sort of People, who are call'd *merry Fellows*; besides, *Jonathan* always pretended to compassionate their Misfortunes, and to shew his Generosity would treat them, and make them drunk, and sometimes perhaps lend them small Matters in their extream Necessities— So that he has sometimes confess'd, that by half a Crown well dispos'd, that is lent with a certain Manner of which he was Master; he has sometimes got fifty, and sometimes a hundred Pounds; which it must be confess'd was laying Money out to a very good Advantage.

We shall prove this by an Example— *Jonathan* came acquainted with *A. B.* a broken Cheesemonger, who had taken Refuge in the *Mint*; this poor Fellow, being charm'd with the Conversation of the ingenious *Jonathan*, spent the little Money he had saved from the Ruin of his Trade, in keeping him Company; when all was gone, *Jonathan* now and then lent him some small Matter, and observing him to be young, active, and a Fellow of Spirit, work'd upon him, and brought him into his Measures, by representing to him the miserable Prospect he had before him; telling him he deserv'd to be damn'd if such a clever Fellow as he shou'd want good Cloaths on his Back, or Money in his Pocket, and that all the World wou'd despise him; therefore, says he, take my Advice, and get Money— The Advice was

was good and seasonable; for there was nothing in the World the poor Fellow wanted more: But how to do it was the Difficulty—therefore he beg'd his Friend *Jonathan* to give him some Advice in that important Affair; Z—ds, says *Jonathan*, I know a great many clever Fellows, who keep the best Company in Town, and make very smart Figures, and if they have not Six-pence in their Pockets now, they'll have Money enough before they go to Bed, that is, if there be any Money to be had betwixt this and *Bath*, or this and *Tunbridge*.

Now the Cheesemonger began to apprehend his Friend *Jonathan*, and in his Necessity and Despair, said he wou'd do any thing; but he had neither Horse nor Arms, nor any means of purchasing them; but *Jonathan*, who did nothing by halves, directed him where good Horses were to be hired for the Use of the Gentlemen of the Snaffle, and gave him as much Money as wou'd pay for the Hire, for he was too cunning to appear in the Matter himself; he also directed him to go upon the *Epsom* Road, telling him there were no Gentlemen out upon the same Lay that way— and thus our Cheesemonger was turn'd into a Gentleman, and equip'd like a Knight Errant in search of Adventures.

After he had loiter'd about the Road for some time, he saw one Man a Horseback coming towards him without any Servant  
or

or Attendance, which proved to be a peaceable Citizen ; him he ventur'd to stop, and commanding him to deliver, the Citizen surrendr'd all the Money he had without any Words, which prov'd to be nine Guineas: As soon as our new Highwayman found himself in Possession of the Money, he made the best of his way Home to his Kennel the *Mint*, without seeking any more Adventures that Day.

He was no sooner alighted, but he found *Jonathan*, who waited to receive him, to whom he very frankly gave an Account of what he had done, and what he had got with all the Circumstances, thinking he had behaved himself very handsomly for a new Beginner ; nay, *Jonathan* himself prais'd him, and for his Encouragement took from him but seven Guineas of the nine, leaving him two as a mark of his Favour.

Perhaps some may be of Opinion, that this Dividend was a little unequal, and that he who ventur'd all shou'd have had the greatest Share of the Booty ; but it must be consider'd on the other Side, that now he was initiated, he was become the Subject, nay, the Slave of *Jonathan*, who had power of Life and Death over him ; and that so far from murmuring at what he took from him, it was *Jonathan's* Opinion he shou'd think himself oblig'd to him that he did not hang him.



The Fellow continu'd every now and then to make Excursions, sometimes on one Road, sometimes on another, constantly doing Business by himself; and if we may believe *Jonathan*, he always left the Fellow some small Matter of what he got, whether it happen'd to be little or much, but this we must take upon his Credit; but however that be, the Cheesemonger was so discontented, that he resolv'd to desert, and see what he cou'd do for himself.

Accordingly, some time after he disappear'd, nor cou'd *Jonathan* find him out by all the Inquiry and Search he cou'd make; *Jonathan* rail'd loudly at him, saying, Thus am I serv'd by a parcel of Rascals when I have put Bread into their Mouths, but I'll hang him if there was not another Rogue left in *England*.— While *Jonathan* was thus enrag'd against the Deserter, some People who had been robb'd upon the *Oxford Road*, came to make Proposals for the Recovery of some Watches and Pocket Books which had been taken from them; *Jonathan* consulted his Books, (for it must be observ'd, he was very exact in minuting down all his Orders) and found that no Gentlemen under his Command had been out upon the Road for a Fortnight before; wherefore he was very inquisitive to know what sort of Man the Person was who had committed those Robberies; and according  
to

to their Description, and by other Circumstances, he was pretty sure it must be the deserting Cheesemonger.

*Jonathan* therefore set out towards *Oxford* well mounted, and well arm'd, intending to renew his Acquaintance with his old Friend, who, according to several Reports, had met with good Luck upon that Road; he jog'd on easily, visiting all the Villages which lay in the By-Roads, both on the Right and Left, going into every Inn, looking into the Stables to see the Horses, and drinking with all the Ostlers and Chamberlains, and enquiring of them what Company was in each House, and what Company they lately had; which was his constant Method when he went in search of a Deserter.

He spent a good deal of Time in this manner to no purpose, when moving on towards *Oxford*, he met a Coach which had been just robb'd; the Coachman giving him warning to take care, and telling him the Place where they had been attack'd, was not above a quarter of a Mile off: Upon this, *Jonathan* enquires the Number of the People who had robb'd them; the Coachman told him it was done by a single Man, and in describing him, confirm'd *Jonathan* it must be his Cheesemonger: Upon this Assurance, *Jonathan* sets Spurs to his Horse, and coming to the Spot which had just before been the Scene of Action, he hastes, and takes a

View of the Ground like an experienced General; and considering with himself what a Man of any Discipline wou'd do after such an Incident, in order to puzzle and beguile his Pursuers in case any Hue and Cry shou'd be rais'd to pursue him, he spied a Lane upon the right Hand, and wisely concluded with himself, that if the Cheesemonger was a Man of Conduct, he must have struck down that Lane, after he had finish'd his Adventure; therefore he doubled his Pace, and after a short Gallop came in sight of a Man in a great Coat, well mounted; he judg'd now that he was come to the end of his Enquiry, and therefore slacken'd his Pace, that he might prepare himself for Battle, (for *Jonathan's* Courage was equal to his Conduct). The Man before hearing the Tread of a Horse, look'd back; but seeing no more than one Man, he thought it had not the Appearance of a Pursuit, and therefore he never mov'd a Step the faster; and it was at such a Distance, that he did not know the sweet Fizz of *Jonathan*. *Jonathan*, who was stuck round with Pistols, as thick as an Orange with Cloves, or like the Man in an old Almanack with Darts, was not idle all this while, but took care to be well cock'd and prim'd, which Part he manag'd under his Great Coat; for he took care to conceal his warlike Appointment, lest it might put the Enemy into a Posture of Defence.

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As he approach'd nearer, the Man cast another Look back, and immediately knew it was *Jonathan*: Upon which he faced about manfully, and drawing his Pistol, bid *Jonathan* stand off, for he had done with him. *Jonathan* put on the Fox's Skin, and employing all his Oratory (for he had an excellent Talent at wheedling) begg'd that they might be good Friends, and go and drink together, swearing that he loved Men of Courage, and that he desired nothing but that they might be good Friends as before—But the valiant Cheesemonger told him his Mind in few Words; *Jonathan*, says he, you have led me here into a damn'd Trade, which I am weary of, and now I've got Money in my Pocket, I am resolv'd to go over to *Holland*, and try to put my self into some honest Business, by which I may get my Living, without Fear or Danger. *Jonathan*, having a Pistol in his Hand, under his Great Coat, which the other could not see, still continued his Wheedling, and approaching nearer and nearer, that he might have a sure Mark, he of a sudden drew forth his desperate Hand, and let fly a Brace of Bullets in the Face of the valiant Cheesemonger, and drawing forth a sharp Hanger at the same Instant, flew upon him like a Tyger, and with one Blow fell'd him to his Horse's Feet, all weltring in his Gore—So have I seen, and with as little Mercy, a gallant Ox fell'd to the Ground by some fierce

Butcher, and so, like *Jonathan*, have I seen him bestride the mighty Beast, and strip him of his Skin.

*Jonathan* thus having obtain'd a compleat Victory, and being Master of the Field, immediately fell to plundering— He found fifty odd Guineas in the Fellow's Pockets, with some Moveables of Value, of which having taken *Livery* and *Seisin*, according to the Law of Arms, he went to the next Town, leading the Horse of the slain in a kind of Triumph, as a Mark of his Victory; and enquiring for the next Justice of Peace, he surrender'd himself, telling him that he had kill'd a Highwayman; and giving a Direction where he had left the Body, the Justice sent and had it taken up, when he was known by some Stage Coachmen and others to be the same that had infested that Road for some time past: *Jonathan* at the same time signifying to the Justice that he was the famous *Wild the Thief-catcher*; the Justice took Bail for him, and *Jonathan* return'd Home to his Wife loaded with Victory and Plunder.

I presume this Story may suffice to let the Reader know by what kind of Policy this *Machiavel* of Thieves supply'd his Commonwealth with Subjects as fast as they were cut off— Those whom he observ'd to be active, brisk and couragious, he put into his Cavalry; there was another Corps which we may call his Dragoons, because they serv'd some-  
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times on Horseback, sometimes on Foot, as was most consistent with the Service; these sometimes went forth doubly arm'd, and on the wide extended Common attack'd the Stage Coach in open Day; other whiles they laid Ambuscades, and lying *perdue* in some Ditch, surpriz'd the heedless Traveller on Foot, and were counted his best Men, being, as the Saying is, *in utrumque parati*, or having two Strings to their Bow.

But as *Jonathan* was a deep Studier of Nature, he knew that Mens Talents were different, and that he who had not Courage enough to bid a Man stand, upon the Road, might nevertheless make an excellent Pick-pocket; and he took care that no Man's Parts should be misapply'd: Nay, it is said that nothing pleas'd him more than to see a Child or Youth of a promising Genius, and that such never wanted his Encouragement; insomuch that a little Boy in a Crowd, having at a certain time stole a Pair of silver Buckles out of a Man's Shoes, without being felt, his Mother, not a little proud of her Child's Ingenuity, presented him to *Jonathan*, who gave him half a Crown, with this prophetick Saying, *My Life on't, he'll prove a great Man*— But I must observe, that *Jonathan's* Prophecy never was fulfill'd, the Youth dying before he came to the Age of Manhood, for he was hang'd before he arriv'd at sixteen.

He



He had another Sort of Gentlemen under his Command, whom in the Cant or Language of the Profession, he distinguish'd by the Name of *Spruce Prigs*; these were Persons not qualified for the bold and manly Employment of Knocking-down, House-breaking, &c. but being Persons of Address and Behaviour, were dispatch'd to Court on Birth-Nights, to Balls, Operas, Plays and Assemblies, for which Purpose they were furnish'd with laced Coats, brocade Waistcoats, fine Perriwigs, and sometimes equipp'd with handsom Equipages, such as Chariots, with Footmen in Liveries, and also *Valet de Chambres*, the Servants being all Thieves like the Master.

This Body of Gentlemen were generally chosen out of such as had been Footmen, who by waiting at Tables, and frequenting publick Places with their Masters and Mistresses, knew something of the Address and Discourse used among Gentlemen; and the better to qualify them to acquit themselves handsomly at Balls, *Jonathan* sometimes paid a Dancingmaster to teach them to dance; that is, after he lost his own Dancingmaster, the celebrated Mr. *Lun*, who died in his own Profession, *viz.* dancing; being hang'd at *Kingston*, for a Robbery on the Highway; who he sometimes said was a great Loss to the Corporation.

There were another Class of the same Sort of Gentlemen, but who did not strike such bold

bold Strokes as the other; or, as we may say, did not fly at such high Game; these appear'd commonly like young Mercers or Drapers, being always dress'd very clean in plain Cloth, good Wigs, and good Linen, with a Ring or Rings on their Fingers; the Places which they haunted most, were *Sadlers-Wells*, and all the Hops about the Town: They were also great Practicers of the Art of Dancing; and some of them were famous for Hornpipes.

Their Business was to promote Country-Dancing, and while the young Fellows and their Girls were very earnest at their Diversion, they were to assist a Confederate (for nothing could be done without a Partner) to carry off the silver Swords, and Canes, if there were any; whilst the Dancer himself was to stand his Ground, always pretending to have lost a Cane, or Hat, amongst the rest, and making the greatest Clamor of all.

The genteelest of these Sort of Gentlemen sometimes took handsom Lodgings of two or three Guineas a Week; and being attended by their sham Servants, these Servants were to give out that their Master was just return'd from his Travels; that he was a Peer, or at least a Baronet of a great Estate: And the better to carry on the Bite, they took care to assume the Name of some Person of great Estate, who was actually Abroad—that his Father, or some Relation, being lately

ly dead, was the Occasion of his coming over in Haste, to take Possession of a great Estate ; and that His Lordship, or Honour, wou'd not appear, nor have it known he was arriv'd, till he had put himself and all his Servants in Mourning ; wherefore a Draper was sent for, and a vast Quantity of fine Cloth was agreed for ; not only for his own Family, but he was to give Mourning to all his Relations—— The Draper was generally recommended by the Landlord, who thought himself very happy in having such a Customer as His Lordship—— As soon as the Cloth came in, it was immediately sent off, being carried away by some Accomplices who waited in the Way, and represented Porters, before the Draper cou'd come for his Money—— But if, as it sometimes happen'd, the Draper came himself at the same time with the Cloth, why then His Lordship was so busy in his Closet that he could not speak to him, but he sent him out a Banker's Note, desiring him to give the rest ; but if the Draper had not Money enough about him, then he was to go and receive the Whole, and bring His Lordship the rest ; but as soon as his Back was turn'd, the whole *Posse* mov'd off, leaving generally an empty Trunk or two to pay for the Lodging.

This Trick has often been play'd in the Streets betwixt the *Temple* and *Somerset-house*, the Situation of those Places being very commodious for making a Retreat by Water. *Jo-*



*Jonathan* one Night at *Southwark-Fair*, was observ'd to sit in one of the Booths, in a Corner of the Pit, as much out of sight as he cou'd; and being ask'd by an Acquaintance what he was doing there?— See that Beau (says he) in the Side-Box, pointing to a handsome young Fellow, who was very fine, that is one of my People, but the Son of a Whore has hid himself from me these two Months, but I'll frighten him out of his Wits; and if you have a mind for a little Sport, go to the next Tavern, and I'll divert you— We had not been there two Minutes (for I was one of the Company) when *Jonathan* enters, with Sir *Fopling*; *Jonathan* immediately, with many Oaths and Menaces, began to question him where he had been, and what the D— was the Reason he had not come near him in all that Time? The Beau, in a very great Fright, swore, and curs'd, and pray'd, all in a Breath, begging *Jonathan* to forgive him, telling him he cou'd not help it, having been in Jail in *Lincolnshire*; where he went upon a very good *Lay*, (that was his Term) for he went down there expecting to marry a Lady of great Fortune; but that miscarrying, that he might not lose his Labour, he *spoke with* a silver Tankard and some Spoons, for which he was committed; however, he managed it so well, by the Assistance of *nimble Dick*, who personated his Servant, that nothing was found upon him, and so the *Pimps* discharg'd

him ; not out of good Will, d——n them, says he, but for Want of Proofs. But that he was upon a Lay at that time (if he wou'd let him go) that he was sure of getting a Gold Watch that Night ; and swore upon his *Honour* he wou'd bring *Jonathan* some Money the next Day.

Upon these Proteftations and Promises, and his paying for a Bottle of Wine, *Jonathan* let him go.— When he was gone, *Jonathan* told us he was an ingenious pretty Fellow, and wou'd live like a Gentleman in any part of the World ; for that the last Birth-night he went to Court as fine as any thing there, and nobody knowing him, he was taken for some young Man of Fortune, juft come to his Estate ; his Design being to pick the King's Pocket, but that he was hinder'd and interrupted by a certain Lady, a Citizen's Wife, who wou'd not let him get near enough for the Fondness she had of shewing herself to his M——y ; however, it cost her dear, for she lost her repeating Watch by the Bargain.— He told us that he had sav'd the young Fellow's Life once by good Management at his Tryal ; for he thought it was pity such a clever Fellow shou'd be cut off so soon, and that he had done a great many handsom Things since that Time : We desir'd to know of *Jonathan* what the young Fellow was originally ; he told us he was the Son of a Chairman, who living with a Lady of  
Quality,

Quality, she put this young Fellow, when a Boy, into a Livery; that this Lady loving her Pleasures, and being a Woman of Intrigue, the Boy got the Reputation of being a very good Pimp; so that if his Lady had not died, he wou'd have been made a Page, and then perhaps Groom of the Chamber, and then recommended to my Lord for some considerable Post; so that by this Time he might have been a topping Grandee, if the Death of the Lady had not put an end to his Hopes of rising that way; for after her Decease, being out of Place, he had no Thought or Ambition of going into any way of getting his Bread but by being a Servant; so that being nimble, and light of Body, he practis'd running, thinking to get a running Footman's Place with some Person of Quality, when I (says *Jonathan*) happen'd to meet with him, and thinking it a pity that such Parts shou'd be buried and lost to the World, I took him into my Protection, and I warrant you'll see him *preferr'd one Time or other*.

But tho' it is some Years since this Thing happen'd, I was, not long since, inform'd by *Jonathan* that the Beau is still alive, that he made a considerable Figure at the last Installment at *Windsor*, being the Person who took the Lady M—n's Diamond Buckle; that when her Ladyship applied to *Jonathan* for the Recovery of it, he ask'd her how much she wou'd give; she answer'd twenty



Guineas ; Z——nds, Madam, says he, you offer nothing, it cost the Gentleman who took it forty for his Coach, Equipage, and other Expences to *Windsor*.

*Jonathan* gave us to understand, that these Gentlemen often visited the *Bath*, *Tunbridge*, and *Epsom*, not staying long in a Place, but going from one to the other, and always thrusting themselves into the best Company ; their Business there was to get Watches and Snuff Boxes, and whenever there happen'd a Crowd on the Walks, or in the long Rooms, then it is these Gentlemen *work* ; and if the Things shou'd happen to be miss'd while they are in the Room, the Figure they make carries them off without being suspected ; but as has been before observ'd, for fear of Accidents, there must be a Footman, not only for State, but for Use, who to prevent the Consequences of a search, receives the Booty from the Master as soon as the Work is done, and conveys it to some Place of Safety.

The Footman in his Way is a Person of as great Service to the Commonwealth of Thieves as the Master ; he is to insinuate himself into the Acquaintance of all the Servants wherever he goes ; from them he is to learn all the Circumstances and Affairs of their respective Masters and Mistresses ;— as what Plate they bring with them to those Places of Pleasure, when they remove to Town, or

to any other Place, and how they go attended, which are very material Advices; for Intelligence is sent of all these Things to *Jonathan*, who takes care to have them spoke with upon the Road, if it be feasible and safe; the Footman is also to endeavour to corrupt some of the Servants he converses with, and if they are Fellows who love Mirth and good Company, they are often delighted with these Fellows, who study to please; and they are by all means to come acquainted with the Servant Maids who live in good Families, and to make Love to some one of them; by these Means they not only become acquainted with the Situation of the House, and know where all the Plate and other rich Moveables are kept; but if one of the Damsels shou'd happen to be captivated with the Person of Mr. *John*, or Mr. *Thomas*, or whatever Name he takes, she may be wrought upon to let him in at Night, and so a good Prize may be got with little Hazard and Danger.

*Jonathan* told us the World was grown so peery, (that was his Term for sharp) that ingenious Men (meaning Thieves) must have Recourse to Stratagems, or else they cou'd not get Bread; for (says he) there are not so many Opportunities of working, as heretofore, there are such a damn'd Number of poor People more than formerly, that are not worth robbing, and those that have made  
them

them poor, and got their Money, take so much care to keep it, and are so well guarded, that it is very difficult to come at them; downright robbing, or your chance Jobs are not worth a Farthing; and I may say without Vanity, that if it had not been for the Confederacy I have form'd, the *Business would have come to nothing*; but let them be as cautious and as cunning as they will, we'll be more cunning than they—— I'll tell you a Stratagem of some of the Gentlemen, I have the Honour to command—— There were a parcel of rich Citizens, who took a singular Pleasure in ringing Bells; one Day in the Week they met and din'd together, and pass'd the rest of the Day in ringing; in Summer Time they travel'd from Place to Place wherever they heard of a good Ring of Bells, in order to divert themselves with ringing, and to try where were the sweetest Bells—— One of our Gentry found Means of getting into their Company; and one Night when they were pretty warm with Wine, and boasting of their great Excellence in ringing; our Spark offer'd, that he and five more he would bring shou'd ring with them for two hundred Guineas, provided he was to name the Bells; they took him up immediately, and enter'd into Articles under the Forfeiture of an hundred Pounds to those that shou'd fail, who named Lincoln Cathedral,



dral, where they agreed to meet by a certain Day.

Our Citizens set out, some in their own Coaches, and some on Horseback with two hundred Guineas for their Wager, and each of them Money besides for Expences; and our Spark with his Confederates met them very punctually—— The Citizens immediately strip'd themselves, in order to put on their ringing Dresses, consisting of Drawers, Waistcoats and Caps; and while they were beginning to try the Bells, one of our People convey'd away their Cloaths; when the rest saw him safe out, they stole off, and mounted their Horses, which were ready, and left the Citizens to enjoy all their Musick themselves—— This Expedition was worth near three hundred Pounds in Money; for all they carried was in their Breeches Pockets; I say three hundred Pounds, besides Watches, Snuff Boxes, Tobacco Boxes, Cloaths, and Perriwigs.

We own'd to *Jonathan*, that this Affair was well projected, and as well executed: Oh, says he, this is nothing to what has been done; for one of our People once stole a House of six Rooms on a Floor, and an hundred and fifty Pounds a Year Rent.

As this appear'd to be a kind of Rhodomontade, we desir'd Mr. *Wild* to let us know how that cou'd be done; and he being very communicative in his Temper, told us the  
Story:

Story : A Gentleman had fitted up a House in *Queen's-Square*, in a very handsom Manner, expecting to let it to some foreign Minister, or *English* Person of Quality ; which as soon as 'twas ready, I equipt a Fellow, who had prov'd himself a Man fit for Business, in a plain neat Suit, gold-headed Cane, Snuff Box, &c. a good Chariot, with two other Rogues for Footmen : This suppos'd Gentleman calls upon the Landlord, and offers to treat with him for the Hire of his House, which he said, if he lik'd his Terms, he would take a Lease of for twenty one Years ; whereupon the Bargain was struck, and in few Days the Leases were drawn, the Rent to be paid at half yearly Payments ; and the Furniture was promis'd by the Squire to be brought in the *Wednesday* following.

The Week after the Landlord calls at the House to see his new Tenant, in order to promote a more intimate Acquaintance, but finds no Body there but a shabby old Man, and not one piece of Furniture ; but on the contrary, two or three of the Marble Chimney Pieces and Slabs taken down : He enquires of the old Man the meaning of it, who told him his Master order'd it, for he did not like the Fashion of 'em, and was pleas'd to have them alter'd. The Landlord swore and storm'd like a Madman, bid him get out of the House, and vow'd neither he nor his Master should have any thing to do there ;

there; but at length was pacify'd upon his assuring him his Master design'd nothing but what was honourable, and would make him all the Satisfaction he could desire; and that the next Day at Noon he would come himself and direct what he would have done: Whereupon he went away, but not very well pleas'd you may be sure; and returning the next Day as the Fellow had appointed, he meets some Men at the Door, carrying out two Chimney-Glasses, and several Pictures that had been fix'd to the Pannels over the Chimney-Pieces, which he stop'd; but the Squire happening himself to be in the House, but without his Chariot or Footmen, required to know by what Authority he stoppt the Goods from going where he sent them? *Why Sir, says the Landlord, are they not my own? What, wou'd you pull my House down before my Face, and send it G—— knows where? why is not your own Furniture brought home as you appointed?* Sir, says the Tenant, *I have had two Children sick of the Small-Pox, which hinder'd me from moving so soon as I expected, but to-morrow some of my Goods will be here. But what are you doing,* replies the Landlord, *with these that you send away?* *Why, says he, I am for fitting up Things according to my own Fancy, and I don't matter the Expence of it; for as I alter the Chimney-Pieces to another Form, the Glasses must be made to answer them, and*

H the



*the Frames of the Pictures I shall have made wider, to square with the Glasses. When I fitted up this House, says the Landlord, I thought it might have serv'd any Man of Quality in the Kingdom. That might be, said the Squire again, I'll have Things done agreeable to my own Humour, for all that: When your Rent's due I'll pay it; and when my Lease is expired, I shall leave the House in as good Condition as I have found it.*

The Landlord finding it in vain to oppose him, and withal that he had promised that some of his Goods would certainly be brought to the House the next Day; which he hoped would be some Security for what he might possibly suffer by the Alterations the Tenant was making, he waited till then, and came again to the House; but was still more provoked, to see that all the Furniture that was brought, consisted of two old Chairs and a Table, not worth half a Crown; and they had in the meantime been so expert in making the Alterations, (as they call'd it) that they had took down a very fine new Stair-case, and the Wainscot of the best Room. Whereupon the Landlord, finding himself really trick'd, arrests the Tenant in an Action of 500*l*. But I got my Gentleman bail'd, and order'd my Attorney to summon the Plaintiff before a Judge, to shew Cause of Action; which he failing to do, was oblig'd to take common Bail: But this not answer-  
ing

ing his Purpose, (for in reality the Defendant ow'd him nothing) the Landlord files a Bill in the *Exchequer*; upon which the Tenant prefers a cross Bill, obliging him to answer to several Points, particularly the Letting the House to him; which as he could not deny, the Landlord's Bill was dismiss'd with Costs of Suit; and the Suit at Common Law went against him also, by Default: And the Tenant going to work again upon the Premises, the Landlord thought fit to make Overtures of Agreement; *viz.* That upon a Surrender of his Lease, and giving up the Possession of the House, in the Condition it was then in, he would pay all his Charges, and release him from all Damages whatsoever: Which, since there was no more to be got, by my Consent, the Terms were accepted of; and so the Landlord, besides a Year and a half's Rent, sat down at 400*l.* Loss. Which I suppose will make him take a little more Care how he lets his Houses.

At one time the stealing Shopkeepers Account-Books was grown a considerable Branch of Trade; of which *Jonathan* gave us one Instance, which is worth relating.

A Merchant, a considerable Dealer in Hops, in *Thames-street*, had his Books stole; and applying to me, offer'd ten Guineas to have them restor'd: The *Prigs*, says he, were in my *Ken*, that *nim'd* 'em out of his *Swag*. To explain this Language, it means, that the



Thieves were then in his House, that stole them out of the Shop. But to go on with the Story in plain Terms; *Jonathan* went into the Room where they were, and made the Report; but they sitting in Council, with two or three others of the same Squadron, tho' not in that Detachment, declared that they thought the Books were really worth twenty, that is, to return to the Owners; which *Jonathan* notify'd to the Merchant: But in short, the Agreement was fifteen. But then arose a Dispute about the Delivery; *Jonathan* propos'd that he should leave the Money behind him, and the Books be brought to his House; which he scrupling, *Jonathan* said to him, *Sir, do you question my Honour? I scorn to do an ill thing by any Man.* No, *Sir*, answer'd he, *by no means*; and then readily laid down the Money, and went his Way: And before he got home himself, the Books were at his House. Which serves to shew how far *Jonathan's* Honour was to be depended on.

Within three Weeks the same Gentleman came to *Jonathan's* House upon the very same Business, for his Shop-Books were gone again; and he would fain have had five Guineas bated this time, because of his having been a Customer before; but *Jonathan* said, 'twas nothing to him: *If the Gentleman, says he, will take five Shillings, I shall agree to it.* So, in short, he paid down his Money,  
like



like a fair Dealer, and was going home, as before; but *Jonathan* call'd him back, and ask'd him how; and in what part of his Shop, his Counting-house was built? He told him 'twas next the Street, and the Door open'd within-side, behind the Counter. Why, says *Jonathan*, you are quite wrong, you'll never keep your Books, if that's the Case: But I'll come to Morrow my self, and see it, and then I'll advise you what's proper to be done.

The next Day *Jonathan* comes to *Thames-street* (the Books having been sent before) and meets with the Merchant at home: He takes a Survey of the whole Affair, and advises the old Counting-house to be pull'd down, and a new one to be erected at the farther End of the Shop, and to break out a Sky-light over head; this, he said, would be the only Contrivance to make all safe: Which was done according to *Jonathan's* Model; and yet hardly a Month happen'd before it was again attack'd with the like Success, and cost him the same Sum over again, to get it out of *Jonathan's* Purgatory. The Manner of the Adventure is as follows: A Gentleman well dress'd, watch'd his Opportunity, and came into the Shop, and ask'd if Mr. ——— was at home? Whereupon he was told that he himself was the Person. Sir, says he, I have two or three Words to speak with you in private; and so walks him towards his Counting-house: The Hop-merchant

chant goes in first, expecting the Gentleman wou'd have follow'd, in order to declare his Business to him there; but instead of that, he only reaches out his Hand to the Desk, upon which the abovementioned Books lay, and takes them away, and at the same instant shuts to the Door, locks it upon the Hop-Dealer, and walks off very leisurely.

*Jonathan* about this time had one of his best Hands deserted him, and yet the Fellow still did Business, as Mr. *Wild* found by his Books and the Accounts that came in. *Jonathan's* Clerk minuted down a Gold Watch, a pair of Diamond Ear-Rings, with several other Things of less value, which were *made*, that is, stole in their Language, by this Fellow, and yet he had mis'd several Musters; and *Jonathan*, nor any of his People, had heard one syllable of him for above three Months, any otherwise than that such and such Things were *spoke with*, which he knew must be by the Devil or this Rascal, he said, therefore 'twas time to take him off: Whereupon *Jonathan* was continually upon the hunt for him, but as he kept Company with no other of the Profession, it was a difficult Matter for his Master to get Intelligence of him without his grand Master's Assistance; but whether the Devil did really put it into his Servant *Jonathan's* Head, or what other way he found it out, I can't say; but true it is, that at length he got certain Information where he then lodg'd.

Mr.

Mr. *Wild* had my Lord Chief Justice's Warrant in his Pocket, so taking two or three Constables with him, about four in the Morning he beset the House, which was in *Bishopsgate-street*, the Corner of ——— street, a Publick-House; *Jonathan* headed the Posse, with a Pistol in each Hand, and up Stairs he goes to his Room, tho' not so silently, but that he heard them upon the Stairs, and therefore he gets up, and puts on his Breeches, Shoes, and Stockings; by that time *Jonathan* had wrench'd open the Door (for it was lock'd within side) upon sight of whom, he gave a spring out of the Window, which was one Story high, and came down into a little Yard, from thence leap'd over a Wall into the Street, and ran cross the Way into a Linen-Draper's House, whose Door happen'd to stand open. At that time the Servants of the House were washing below Stairs, to whom the Fellow begs for Protection; for that he was pursu'd by Bailiffs, and if he should be taken, he must be inevitably ruin'd and undone. The poor credulous Women pity'd the Man's Case, and told him, he should stay with them till the Blood-sucking Villains were gone. To return to *Jonathan* and the Constables, as soon as they saw their Man fly out of the Window, you may be sure they were not long behind him; but as much Haste as they made down Stairs, they saw not the least Shadow of him, neither in the Yard, or  
in



in the Street, which prodigiously surpriz'd them all: But *Jonathan* peer'd about, being satisfy'd; his Motion from the Window was downwards, therefore he must have taken House somewhere; and, at last, spy'd this Linen-Draper's Door open; he goes over, acquaints the Gentleman with what had happen'd, and assures him, the Rogue could be no where but in his House: He said, he had seen no such Person, and that he had not been from the Shop above a Minute. *Sir*, says *Jonathan*, *that was the very time he slept in; give me leave to search for him.* Which being granted, he went into the Wash-house, where, for a good while, they deny'd they saw any such Person, till being informed he was no Debtor, but a Highwayman and House-breaker, they own'd the Matter, and told *Mr. Wild*, the Man he look'd for was in the Coal-hole under the Stairs; whereupon he takes a Candle, calls all his Myrmidons about him, and into the Coal-hole he goes, but no Highwayman was there; then he searches round the Cellar, Kitchen, and in short, every Place where he thought a Man could be conceal'd, but no Body was to be seen. *Jonathan* own'd he never was so foil'd in all the Course of his Practice before; he came up and told the Master of the House there was no Body there; the Washer-women were frightned out of their Wits, believing they had seen a Spirit, and all look'd very foolish upon

upon one another, till the Linen-Draper gave them to know, that if any Man went down Stairs, he must be there still, for he was sure no Body had come up from thence, he having staid in Sight ever since, and then persuaded *Jonathan* to go down again, and look into all the Washing-Tubs, and search every Place over again ; for there is, says he, no other Way to get out, but up these Stairs, and so into the Street.

Mr. *Wild* was prevail'd upon at last, and he and the Constables, with his *Guard de Corps*, re-descended, and finding one of the Tubs standing Bottom upwards, they turn'd that up, as the Gentleman had put it into their Heads, and there they found poor *Culprit*. *Jonathan* had no Patience, but flew upon him like a Tyger. *You treacherous Dog*, said he, where are the Diamond Ear-Rings, and Gold-Watch you stole at such a Place? G---- d-----n me, you Villain, you cheating Son of a Whore, I'll hang you, if there's never another Rogue in *England*, you vile Rascal.

We must remark here, that tho' *Jonathan* in the main us'd to talk up the Gentlemen of his Game, to be generally bright clever Fellows ; yet when he was angry with some of them, he would own *there were Scoundrels of the Profession*.

Notwithstanding this Bounce of *Jonathan's*, the Prisoner understood how to soften this *Machiavel's* Temper ; and thereupon whisper'd

per'd him to go up to his Lodging, and look behind the Head of the Bed, which *Jonathan* did, telling the People of the House, he must go up Stairs for the Fellow's Cloaths, which he brought down along with him, and in a Hole where the Thief directed him to, he found a gold Watch, two silver ones, Rings, and other Things of Value, which he put into his own Pocket, for any Body else would not have known what to have done with them; and the Prisoner being carried before the Justice, was committed on Suspicion of Felony, and the next Sessions no Body appearing against him, he was discharged.

The Success that *Jonathan* went on with in his Business, render'd him famous all over *London*; and he made use of several little Arts to make himself appear considerable to distant Parts of the Kingdom, particularly by some Printers of News-Papers, and Dying-Speeches, whom he prevail'd on to give him a Character therein, in which he was generally stiled THIEF-CATCHER-GENERAL OF GREAT-BRITAIN. His House was handsomely furnish'd, and set out with Plate, Pictures, &c. and when his Wife appear'd abroad, it was generally with a Footman in a fine lac'd Livery. He kept a Country-House, dress'd well, and in Company affected an Air of Grandeur. A little before his Catastrophe he promis'd me a Haunch or a Side of Venison whenever I pleas'd to send to him, saying, he had two  
Parks



Parks at his Command, well stock'd with Deer.

The Wealth that he was suppos'd to have amass'd by this Business, made several Persons look upon him with Envy ; and some well enough acquainted in the Roguish Arts, attempted to set up against him a few Years ago ; the Principal were, one *Felt----*, a superannuated Thief, *Riddle----* an Attorney and Thief, whose chief Merit for the Support of his Pretensions to this Practice, was, his having sacrilegiously and feloniously broke open the Royal-Chapel at *White-hall*, and stole thence the Communion-Plate, and Mr. *H----*, City Mar---l. This last, and *Jonathan*, wrote Pamphlets against each other, as it was the Custom then between great Men ; but *Jonathan* laying himself too open, *H-----* dropt the Pen, and took up the Cudgels of the Law, with which he bang'd *Jonathan*, so that he thought fit to buy his Peace at the Price of a Sum of Money.

However, none of them all was able to give *Jonathan* any notable Disturbance in his Office ; on the contrary, he found Means soon after to get *Riddle-----* transported for not complying with the Conditions of his Pardon, to make *Felt----* run mad, and *H----* entirely to quit his Pretensions.

Wherefore he turn'd himself again to his Business.---And, as we were enumerating how  
I 2 many

many Species of Thieves he had under his Command, we shall resume that Part of our Story.

There were another Sort of Gentry under his Command, whose Business it was to loiter about the Streets in the Day-time ; and as Servants, who go of short Errands to a Chandler's Shop, or Baker's, are apt to leave the Door ajar, (as they call it) they were to whip in, and seize upon the next Thing that was portable, and bring it off. They generally peep'd in, to see that no Body was in the Fore-Parlours, and if by Chance any Body should surprize them, they were ready to enquire if some Person with a strange Name did not live there ; tho' it seldom falls out so, because they generally do their Business in a Minute.

These Sort of People sometimes go in Liveries, and sometimes dress'd like Ticket Porters with Silver Badges either upon their Coats, or about their Necks ; one of them some Time since whipp'd into a House in *King-Street*, near *Long-Acre*, which is divided into Tenements, the People furnishing their own Lodgings, and going directly up two pair of Stairs, from whence he saw a Woman, who inhabited it, come down ; he easily put back the Lock, and finding nothing in the Room of any Value, except the Bedding, he tied it all up, and was carrying it off, when the Owner happen'd to meet him at

the

the lower End of the Stairs, and asking him where he was carrying that Bedding? He answer'd, without Hesitation, that he brought it from Mr. ----- the Upholsterer, and was carrying it to such a one, but I find they don't live here. Oh! says the Woman, they live at next Door; thank you, Mistress, says the Fellow; and before she got up Stairs, to find it was her own Bedding, he had got into a Hackney Coach, and carried it safe off.

These People sometimes went disguis'd like Chairmen in great Coats and Harness, and a couple of them meeting together, stole the young Dutchess of *Marlborough's* Chair, as her Grace was visiting at Mrs. *H---n's* in *Piccadilly*, her Chairmen and Footmen being gone to a neighbouring Ale-House; one of her Servants thought immediately of applying to Mr. *Wild*, who told him, that if he wou'd leave ten Guineas, he might have the Chair the next Day; the Man made some Difficulty of leaving the Money before-hand, but Mr. *Wild* told him he was a Man of Honour, and scorn'd to wrong him, and indeed his Character was by this Time establish'd as a Man that dealt honourably in his Way; so that the Man ventur'd at last to leave the Money; wherefore Mr. *Wild* bid him direct the Dutchess's Chairmen to attend the Morning Prayers at *Lincoln's-Inn-Chapel*, and there they shou'd find the Chair; which the Fellows did accordingly, and they found



found the Chair, with the Crimson Velvet Cushions and Damask Curtains all safe, and unhurt.

And it must be observ'd, that whenever *Jonathan* oblig'd the Parties to leave the Money before-hand, he very punctually comply'd with the Terms of Agreement, as to the Delivery of the Goods; for one of his common Sayings was, *that Honesty was the best Policy.*

He frequently drew out Detachments of some of his cleverest Fellows, whom he sent out upon Command to Country Fairs; upon which Occasion he generally march'd out himself, for indeed the Service could not be well carried on without him; for the common People seeing *Jonathan* there, were the more careless; because he always gave out, that he came to take some Rogues whom he suspected to be there, and the People had a Notion that his Presence frightned away the Thieves; and to countenance this Belief, he went doubly and trebly arm'd, and often wore Armour under his Cloaths, which he took care to shew in all Companies; being attended by three or four, and sometimes half a Dozen terrible looking Fellows by way of *Garde du Corps*, as if all Thieves in *England* had vow'd to sacrifice him.

This Grimace took very well, for it gave him an Opportunity of protecting and carrying off the Booty which was made in these Fairs

Fairs; and if any of his Party was in Danger of being taken, these Myrmidons of his, who pass'd for his Body Guard, were to run into the Crowd, and under pretence of assisting the People, who were about to seize such Rogues, were to try to shuffe off, and favour their Escape.

In fine, his Business in all Things was to put a false Gloss upon Things; and to make *Fools* of Mankind (which was his own Expression;) yet, when he had a Mind to be merry, to drink his Bottle, and to laugh at the World, he talk'd with too much Freedom of himself, and his own Management, and not without some Vanity; of which there are a thousand Instances: We shall give one, because it is short—— A certain Tradesman, a very honest Man, tho' of *Jonathan's* Acquaintance, going into a Tavern, where he expected to meet some Company, by Mistake went in where *Jonathan* was drinking with some merry Fellows; the Tradesman was about to draw back, but *Jonathan* press'd him to sit down and take a Glass with them; the Tradesman was a little angry with *Jonathan* for the following Reason; about a Week before passing thro' a Country Fair, he saw *Jonathan* a Horseback, and asking him how he did, *Jonathan* damn'd him, and bid him not trouble him with impertinent Questions; therefore, the Tradesman desir'd to know the Reason why *Jonathan* snapp'd him up in that  
rude

rude angry Manner, when he had spoke to him so civilly? Z — ds, says *Jonathan*, you disturb'd me in my Business, for *I had at that Time twenty Pair of Hands at Work.*

And indeed, he employ'd Hands in all sorts of Works; so that according to the Author of the *Fable of the Bees*, he was a great Benefactor to Trade; for as some of our News Papers have observ'd, he kept in Pay many Artists for the altering of Watches and Rings; so he also kept a kind of Magazine, or Armory, of all kind of Instruments us'd in *Thievery*, as Picklocks, Files, Saws, and Engines for forcing Doors, Windows, &c. which he made no Secret of shewing, pretending he found them upon such and such House-breakers whom he had taken and convicted, tho' it is certain he did not suffer them to grow rusty for want of Use; for he never went into a House, but like an Engineer, he wou'd view on which side it might be attack'd with the most Advantage, and he knew better Things, than to send his Men upon Actions without Arms.

Sometimes *Jonathan* spoke in the Stile of a Prince; as when the Son of Mrs. *Knap*, who was murder'd by a Footpad, near *Gray's-Inn-Wall*, went to him, to desire his Assistance in taking the Murderer, and putting ten Guineas in his Hand for his Encouragement, with a Promise of forty more when the Work shou'd be done; *Jonathan* answer'd him



him gravely, he might depend he wou'd produce the Villian; *for*, says he, *I never pardon Murther*—— and indeed he was as good as his Word, for he seized the Fellow at the *Jerusalem Tavern* in *Clerkenwell*, and he was hang'd the Sessions following.

Whilst he went on with this Tide of Success, and seem'd to carry the World before him, an ill Wind arose, which blew from a certain Corner of the Law, and which seem'd to threaten the Overthrow of his Commonwealth ----For Sir *W-----m T-----son* observing what Mischiefs arose from the Practice of receiving stolen Goods, and returning them again to the Proprietors for such Sums of Money as the Receiver and Proprietor agreed upon, which Money no doubt must be divided betwixt the Receiver and Thief; thought of putting an end to it, by bringing a Bill into the House of Commons, for the *more effectual transporting of Felons, and for preventing Burglaries and Felons*, in which among other Things was the following Clause.

“ And whereas there are several Persons  
 “ who have secret Acquaintance with Felons,  
 “ and who make it their Business to help  
 “ Persons to their stolen Goods, and by that  
 “ means gain Money from them, which is  
 “ divided between them and the Felons,  
 “ whereby they greatly encourage such Offenders: Be it Enacted by the Authority  
 K . “ afore-

“ aforesaid, That where-ever any Person taketh Money or Reward, directly or indirectly, under Pretence or upon Account of helping any Person or Persons to any stolen Goods or Chattles, every such Person so taking Money or Reward as aforesaid, (unless such Person do apprehend, or cause to be apprehended, such Felon who stole the same, and cause such Felon to be brought to his Trial for the same, and give Evidence against him) shall be guilty of Felony, and suffer the Pains and Penalties of Felony, according to the Nature of the Felony committed in stealing such Goods, and in such and the same Manner as if such Offender had himself stole such Goods and Chattels, in the Manner and with such Circumstances as the same were stolen.

We are well inform'd, that after this Act had pass'd the R-----r was pleas'd to send for *Wild* to admonish him, and let him know the Danger and Hazard of pursuing the same Course of Life any longer, and recommended to him to detect Rogues and bring them to Justice; promising upon that Condition, to give him all Encouragement, reminding him of what considerable Sums he had got that Way already, by which he might judge that he might get sufficient to keep him by doing good Service to the Publick, and living honestly.

Whether

Whether these good Admonitions, or the Fear of this new Law, wrought upon his Conscience, is uncertain ; but there was a sudden Damp put upon all his Business, his *Books were shut up* for some Weeks, and he grew so abstemious, that he refused several Sums offer'd him for the Recovery of things stolen---Yet, he did not break off all Acquaintance and Correspondence with his old Friends and Allies, the Thieves ; on the contrary, having the Command of some Money he gave them some small Matters (just what he pleas'd) for what *Old Nick* had sent them in their Way, and deposited the Goods up in a Warehouse.

In the mean time, all *Wild's* Acquaintance were inquisitive to know what he intended to turn himself to ; for they took it, for granted, that this new Act had quite cut him out of his former Business ; having a Notion that he was too cunning ever to venture himself within the Clutches of the Law. — Wherefore he talk'd of a new Project ; which was, for setting up a Policy, and opening an Office for taking in Subscriptions for insuring against Robbery ; pretending to settle a sufficient Fund, and give good Security for the Performance of Articles ; sometimes shewing a manuscript Paper of Proposals, and consulting People whom he supposed to have any Understanding in those Affairs, extolling the great Use and



Advantage this Project wou'd be to the Publick ; not doubting, he said, but that all Trading People, as well as Gentlemen and Noblemen, who kept great Quantities of Plate in their Houses, wou'd for their own sakes encourage so useful an Undertaking ; bragging that it was no *South-Sea-Bubble*, and that he could fairly make a great Fortune by it.

Whether he gave out this Report only to amuse People, and to hinder them from enquiring any farther into his Affairs ; or whether he was in earnest, and thought to bring it to bear, I can't tell ; but the Thing was generally receiv'd as a Banter, or as a Piece of Mr. *Wild's* Wit, and no farther Steps were taken in it.

It was about this time, that he projected the carrying on a Trade to *Holland* and *Flanders* ; and thereupon purchas'd a Sloop, and put in one *Roger F—son* to command her, who had long been one of *Jonathan's* clever Fellows. He carry'd over Gold Watches, Rings, Plate, and now and then a Bank or Goldsmith's Note, that had been *spoke with* by the way of the Mail. His chief Trading Port was *Ostend*, where he is particularly well known ; from thence he usually travell'd up to *Bruges*, *Ghent*, *Brussels*, and other great Towns, where he brought his Toys and Jewels to Market, and then return'd to his Sloop, tokg in a Lading of *Holland*,  
lands,

lands, and other Goods, and came back to the River of *Thames*.

It is not to be expected that *Jonathan* and *Roger* would let any one share in the Profits of such an honourable Profession: It would have been inconsistent with their Practice, who never paid for any thing, to pay Custom; that would have been reflected upon as idle and foolish: No, the Cargoe came generally safe to Land the first Night; and at a certain House within forty Miles of *Newington-Buts*, most Part of the dark Business was acted; where Councils were secretly held, and the Projects form'd. But I hope from what has happen'd, some Persons who are well known, will have Prudence to take Warning, since I can assure them that their Actions are sifting into by Persons of no small Penetration, and whom they are not entire Strangers to.

But to return from this Digression, *Roger* drove on the Business above-mentioned but two Years, which was owing to an Accident that he himself was the Occasion of: It happen'd, that by some Negligence or other, two Pieces of *Holland* were lost in the shipping them for *England*, which, when he arriv'd, he stopp'd out of his Mate's Wages, making him pay for the whole Loss. This so provok'd the Mate, that he went immediately and gave Information of *Jon--n's* running such Quantities of Goods. Where-  
upon

upon the Vessel was exchequer'd in the River, and he was oblig'd to stand a Trial with the King, in which he was cast in 700*l.* Damages; and so his Trade was put an End to in that particular Way.

This Stop brought *Jonathan* again to Consideration; he soon miss'd his Returns from *Ostend*, and having three Wives living, and always a Seraglio of Mistresses, no less than half a dozen at a time, to maintain, according to his Rank; and being frequently importun'd and teaz'd by People who had been robb'd, to help them to their Goods, he ventur'd to dabble a little again; but with great Caution, and for none but such as he took to be Men of Honour; every now and then bringing in an Offering to the Gallows of some idle Rascal who did not mind his Business, and who, according to his Notions, was fit for nothing but hanging.

Finding no bad Consequence to proceed from his new Practice, it made him bolder and bolder, so that he began to think he might go on as before, and that he should be conniv'd at; in a small time carrying on his Trade with very little Caution, he went publickly down to the late Instalment at *Windsor*, accompanied by his Lady *Madam Wild*, attended by a couple of Footmen in laced Liveries; and the Detachment, he commanded down upon that Occasion, made



made as good a Figure, both for Dress and Equipage, as any People there.

As there was a very great Booty brought off safe from that Expedition, Mr. *Wild* had more than ordinary Court made to him by People of Fashion of both Sexes, who solicited hard to have their Jewels, Watches, &c. return'd upon a reasonable Composition; and his open Way of treating upon this Occasion was the most impudent thing he ever did in Contempt of the late Act — He proceeded so far as to break off with several People, because they wou'd not come up to his Terms; and he considerably advanced the Price of stolen Goods; for whereas at first he took no more for any thing of Plate than its Value in Weight, now he wou'd make People pay something for the Fashion also, otherwise they should never have them; intending to send them over to *Holland*, where they might come to a better Market. —

Yet no Prosecution follow'd all these daring Proceedings; which made him think, no doubt, that he could do any thing; yet he had not long ago a narrow Escape, as we shall shew by the following Relation.

*Jonathan*, sitting one Day at an Inn in *Smithfield*, observ'd a large Trunk in the Yard, and imagining there might be some Things of Value therein, he immediately went home, and order'd one *Rann*, a notorious

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rious Acquaintance , to habit himself like a Porter, and to endeavour to *speak with it* : *Rann* obeys his Master's Commands, and accordingly succeeds. The Trunk belong'd to Mr. *Jarvis*, a Whip-maker in that Neighbourhood, who was sending it down to a Dealer in the Country. There was in it a great Quantity of rich Linen, and other Things for a Wedding. Upon Mr. *Jarvis*'s applying to *Wild*, after many Delays, he had most of the Goods again for ten Guineas. But soon after *Wild* and *Rann* falling out, he got him hang'd. And the Day before his Execution, he sent for Mr. *Jarvis*, and related to him the above Particulars: But Mr. *Jarvis* dying soon after, *Jonathan* had the good Luck to hear no more of the Matter.

But now it being decreed by Providence, that *Jonathan* should reign no longer, he was infatuated to do a Thing which brought on his Destruction—— Certain Persons having Information where a considerable Quantity of rich Goods lay, supposed to be stolen, obtain'd a Warrant for the Seizure of them; which was accordingly done: Tho' *Jonathan* did not go and claim the Goods as his own, he had the Assurance to take out an Action, in the Name of *Roger Johnston*, to whom he pretended the Goods belong'd, and arrested the Person or Persons who seiz'd them. Thus he pretended to recover those Goods by Law, for possessing which (if they were

were found upon him) the Law would hang him——

A Proceeding so bare-faced and impudent, put certain Persons upon finding out Means of bringing so sturdy a Rogue to Justice; *Jonathan* was threaten'd loud, which occasion'd a Report all over the Town, that he was fled from Justice; upon which Occasion, he publish'd a bullying Advertisement in some of the News Papers, offering a Reward of ten Guineas to any Person who shou'd discover the Author of such a scandalous Report; at the same Time he run into all publick Places to shew himself, and let the World see that he was not run away as was reported—— Yet, in the midst of all this blustering he was seized and committed to *Newgate*.

There are some other Circumstances in this Story, but as we had it only from his own Mouth, that he was malicious against the Persons concerned, and endeavour'd to asperse them, we shall say no more of it.

How far *Roger John---n* was concern'd with *Wild* at the Time of his Apprehension, I leave the World to judge, when immediately upon his being committed to *Newgate*, an Express was sent over, and *John---n*, with another of the Trade, came down to *Ostend*, and appear'd like Persons of Quality, told the News to all about him, and swore he'd hang both *Jonathan* and the B--- who  
L. calls



calls her self his Wife; so he takes a Packet and hires her for *Dover*, where he arriv'd: But as he has not appear'd publickly in *London*, we may very well suppose that the hanging of them was the least Part of his Business.

We can't forbear observing something remarkable in the Fate of this Fellow; first, that he had Opportunities of escaping after he knew that a Prosecution was design'd against him; and *secondly*, that the Fact for which he died, was committed whilst he was a Prisoner in *Newgate*; for he was so blind, as to imagine, that the taking but ten Guineas for the Recovery of the Lace, when the Woman offered fifteen or twenty, and refusing to accept of any Thing for his own Trouble, and also that palliating Speech he made her, that he did these Things only to *serve poor People who had been wronged*, wou'd have been Circumstances in his Favour when he should come to be tried; not considering that he directly by this Action incurr'd the Penalty of the Act of Parliament before quoted; which is a Proof that all his former Cunning and Sagacity forsook him, when he wanted it most, and makes good that Saying — *Quem Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius*--- Jupiter first takes away the Understanding of him whom he has a Mind to destroy.

I believe no Malefactor ever stood his Ground so long, committing every Day acts  
of

of Felony in Sight of the World; so that I've heard him compute, that in fifteen Years he had receiv'd near ten thousand Pounds for his Dividend of stoln Goods return'd, living all this while in Riot and Voluptuousness.

But Vengeance at length overtook him, and from the Minute of his being seized, his Sense and Resolution fail'd; nor was he spirited up by the Hopes of a Reprieve, which some People endeavoured to flatter him with, and industriously spread such a Rumour about, whilst they were trembling, lest it should be so; because, he and they are suppos'd to be no Strangers to each others Practices.

We shall not trouble the Readers with any Thing which has already been made Publick, concerning this extraordinary Fellow, who has made so much Noise in the World; therefore we shall conclude, with observing that whoever had seen him in the Gaiety of his Life, when all his Rogueries were successful; and had also been Witness of his deplorable State of Mind after his Condemnation, might have drawn a Lesson of Morality from it, which perhaps might have been of Use to an Atheist.

I say, to have seen one remarkable for the Gaiety of his Temper, for a vast Depth of Cunning, as well as Hardness and personal Courage, so chang'd at the Apprehensions of his approaching Death, and the great Account which is to follow; to have seen him

under the greatest Distractions and Horrors of Mind, that human Nature is capable of suffering, wou'd be convinc'd, that *Virtue only can give true Tranquillity, and nothing can support a Man against the Terrors of Death, but a good Conscience.*

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A true COPY of a Paper, written by JONATHAN WILDE, on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> Day of May, 1725, and designed to have been deliver'd by him at the Place of Execution, to the Reverend Mr. Edwards; but was prevented by the Draught of *Opium* he took the Night before his Death in the Condemn'd Hold of *Newgate*.

**I**T having pleased Almighty God in his Justice, to put an End to a most vicious and wicked Course of Life, by a shameful and ignominious Death; the World will expect some Account of my real Sentiments, and Behaviour under so great a Vicissitude.

Such as expect any extraordinary Discoveries and Confessions from me, will be disappointed; for my Affairs are too much confus'd, and my Mind too sadly perplexed to give



me Room to satisfy the Curious in a particular Manner; neither do I believe it would be of any publick Advantage, except to some few Printers and Publishers.

Let it suffice, that I have gone on in a long Series of dreadful Guilt, and no Crime (Treason, Murder, and Sodomy excepted) escaped me; for which God's Vengeance has now overtaken me. My rash Zeal to serve Mr. Johnson, by directing an Action to be brought for the Recovery of his Effects, has facilitated my Fate, and utterly undone me, by putting me into the Hands and Power of my Enemies. That I had previous Notice of their Designs, and of Warrants being issued against me, is too notorious to be contested; and I might have escaped far enough out of their Reach many Times, if I had thought my self in any Danger; but I am equally surprized with the rest of the World, who never thought Matters could have been carried to this Height against me.

The Methods I took for to procure a Respite, and protract the Time of my Execution, were no other than what is natural enough to poor Wretches under the dreadful Sentence of Death, and what has been often practised by Malefactors of much greater Rank and Quality than my self. I mean my pretending to discover the Persons that robb'd the Exchequer; but the Government was wiser, and  
knew

knew better Things than to be imposed on by so mean and despicable a Criminal.

As Mr. Recorder was pleased at my Tryal, to say that the Clause in the Act of Parliament, by which I now fall, was directly levelled against me; and that himself had frequently admonished me against acting in Contempt of the same. I do not pretend to deny it; but presuming on the Services I did the Publick, by apprehending and bringing to Justice great Numbers of Robbers, at the apparent Hazard of my Life; I hoped that Law might have been dispensed with, and those Services ballance the Inconveniencies arising from my recovering stolen Goods; and indeed it was upon this Foundation that I all along acted.

I return Thanks to my Neighbours and others, who did so readily attend at the Sessions-House to have testified for my Demeanour amongst them, if there had been Occasion for it; and to all other Persons whatsoever who have assisted me in my Misery, and wished well to me.

And particularly my dying Thanks to the Reverend Dr. Knight, the Reverend Mr. Nicholson, and the Reverend Mr. Purney, for the great Comforts their Christian Labours have brought to my Soul; and to all others who have charitably assisted me to undergo this great Conflict with a Christian Fortitude.

The Reason I have to expect ill Treatment from the Populace, gives me much Uneasiness,  
and

and strikes me with great Terror. The barbarous Insults I met with from them after my receiving Sentence of Death at the Sessions-house, I believe were such, as never was shewn before to a Person in my Circumstances, in no Country upon Earth. I freely forgive them, and all the rest of my Enemies whatsoever, hoping to meet with Forgiveness for all my enormous Crimes and Offences from the great God of Mercy and Truth, whom I have throughout the whole Course of my Life grievously offended. Lord have Mercy upon me. Lord receive me.

JONATHAN WILDE.

F I N I S.







COLLEGE WHITEHOLE

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